



Bachelor Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR AND TOURISM EXPERIENCE

A COMPARISON OF GERMAN AND DUTCH TOURISTS

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List of Abbreviations

PDI Power Distance

UAI Uncertainty Avoidance

IDV Individualism vs. Collectivism

MAS Masculinity vs. Femininity

LTO Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation

IND Indulgence vs. Restraint

AR Augmented Reality

DZT Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus e.V.

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1 Introduction

The key to success is understanding consumer behavior. Knowing the reasons behind customer purchases allows marketers to create effective marketing strategies that can sway purchasing choices. However, it's not just about selling products or services; understanding consumer behavior can also help businesses to better meet customer needs and enhance their experiences. Culture is one factor that influences consumer behavior, if not even the most important (Manrai & Manrai, 2011a, p. 170). Given the international character of the tourism industry, understanding the cultural patterns of tourists is crucial to provide an adequate and satisfying product to them (Reisinger, 2009, p. xix). Cultural knowledge helps to understand how tourists travel, what they expect from their trip, how they make travel decisions, and to foster customer's satisfaction and loyalty (Manrai & Manrai, 2011b, pp. 45-46). Furthermore, developing tourism products and services that take into account culture and cultural differences can give destinations and industry players a competitive advantage. Thus, recognizing the importance of cultural differences and examining the influence of culture on travel behavior and tourism experience can provide valuable information for people and companies in the tourism industry (Reisinger & Turner, 2002, p. 311).

There are many ways to define and categorize culture, but it is generally agreed among researchers that Hofstede's cultural dimensions, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, long-term versus short-term orientation, and indulgence versus restraint, provide a significant framework for examining cross-cultural differences in human behavior. Although these dimensions were initially introduced in a business context, they have been thoroughly investigated and found to be relevant in many different fields, including travel and tourism research (Søndergaard, 1994, p. 453). To date, several research studies focused on cross-cultural variations in behavioral differences among tourists. For instance, studies have identified cultural disparities in information-seeking

behaviors for tourism services (Money & Crofts, 2003) the planning and purchase of vacations (Money & Crofts, 2003), trip characteristics (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995), perceptions and satisfaction with service quality (Crofts & Erdmann, 2000; Huang & Crofts, 2019), as well as perceptions of hotel facilities (Matilla, 1999). However, previous studies often focused on individual domains of travel behavior. Therefore, this bachelor thesis aims to investigate the impact of culture, as assessed through the Hofstede dimensions, on the overall travel behavior and experience, encompassing pre-, during-, and post-travel behaviors. Accordingly, the following question is intended to be answered:

How does culture, measured by the Hofstede model, impact travel behavior and tourism experiences?

To answer the research question, a literature review will be conducted, focusing on studies that examine the correlation between at least one aspect of travel behavior and the Hofstede cultural dimensions. The findings from these studies will be synthesized to provide a holistic understanding of how culture influences travel behavior and tourism experience.

Additionally, a case study will be carried out, focusing on exploring the cultural similarities and differences of German and Dutch tourists. These cultural aspects will be linked to the findings of the previously conducted literature review. The primary objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the travel behavior of German and Dutch tourists. Ultimately, practical recommendations will be derived to benefit tourism businesses and organizations, including destination management organizations, hotels, and service providers.

This paper continues by providing definitions of relevant terms such as culture, cultural differences, and travel behavior, as well as an explanation of the Hofstede model. The methodology used for the study is described in detail in the third chapter, while the fourth chapter presents the findings from the literature review and offers an analysis and interpretation of them. In chapter

five, a case study involving German and Dutch tourists is conducted, comparing and contrasting these cultures and relating the outcomes to the findings of the literature research. Subsequently, recommendations for action are derived. The paper ends with a conclusion.

2 Theoretical Foundations

The aim of the upcoming chapter is to establish the theoretical foundation for examining how culture influences travel behavior. For this purpose, culture-related terminology is defined and explained, the Hofstede model is presented and discussed, and consumer purchasing behavior as well as decision-making process in tourism are explained.

2.1 Definition Culture

It is highly challenging to define *culture* as it refers to a broad, complex and multidimensional phenomenon. There is no single, universally accepted definition of culture since various scholars define culture differently depending on their outlook and subject of study. As a result, the concept of culture has been given over a hundred definitions with different meanings and interpretations (Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 4).

As far back as 1952, Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn began cataloguing the extensive array of cultural interpretations, compiling a list of 164 different definitions of culture (Reisinger, 2009, p. 89). After meticulously systemizing and analyzing these definitions, they put forth the following comprehensive and all-encompassing definition:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181)

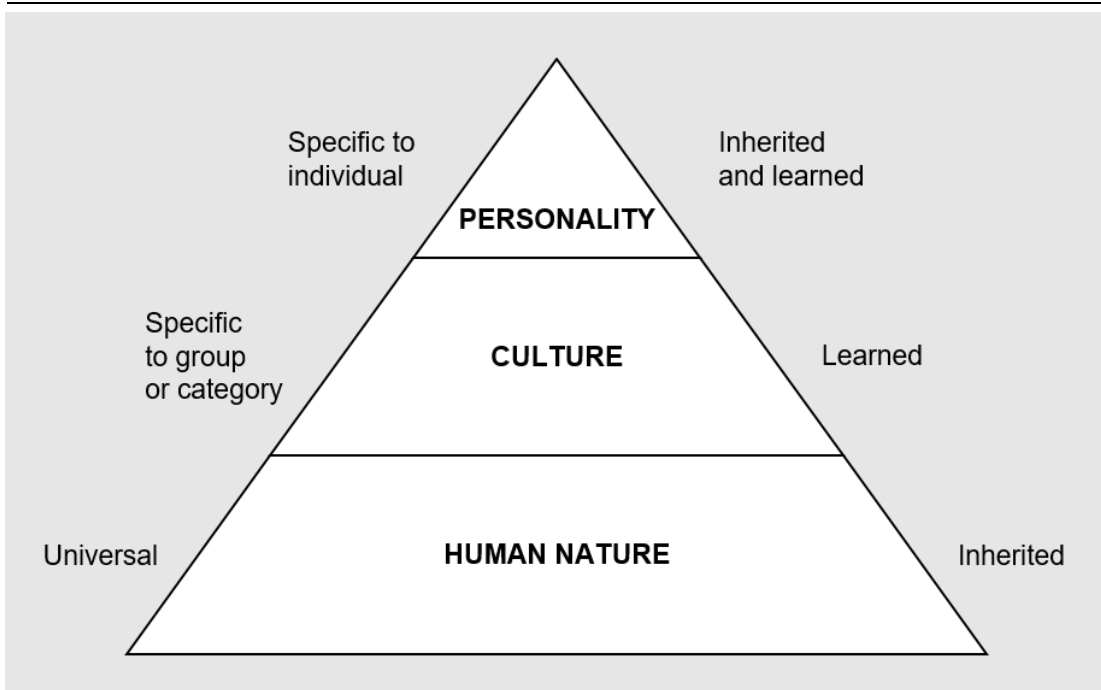
Whereas Geert Hofstede, a social psychologist from the Netherlands and a leading figure in cultural research, offers a more straightforward definition that has found significant acceptance, especially in the field of comparative cultural studies. According to him, culture can be understood as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6).

The term *collective programming of the mind* encompasses the patterns of thinking, feeling and acting. This mental programming is not passed down through genetics but learned, particularly during the early years of childhood. Thus, culture is significantly influenced and shaped by the social environment one grew up in (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 4-6).

Culture, as a collective phenomenon, can refer to organizations, nations, or other social groups (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21). However, in the context of this paper, the emphasis is placed on national groups. Therefore, the definition of national culture can be described in the following manner: “The collective programming of the mind acquired by growing up in a particular country” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 520).

However, an individual’s behavior cannot be solely attributed to their culture; it is also influenced by human nature and their individual personalities, as shown in figure 1 below (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 6). It is crucial to differentiate culture from these two factors.

Figure 1: Three Levels of Uniqueness in Mental Programming



Source: (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind, 2010, p. 6)

Human nature refers to the fundamental characteristics and abilities shared by all human beings. They are inherited through our genes. A few examples are the ability to sense emotions like love, anger, fear, joy, or sadness; the innate desire for companionship and physical activity; as well as the ability to observe one's surroundings and engage in conversations with others about them. However, how individuals choose to express and channel these emotions, as well as their manner of sharing joy, observations, and other experiences, is influenced and shaped by *culture* (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 6-7). Therefore, culture can be seen as the collective response of a human group to its environment (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21). The *personality* of an individual, on the other hand, is different for each person. It is shaped by a combinations of inherited traits and learned attributes, influenced both by culture and personal experience (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 7). The individual mental programming of each person and thus the behavior of a person arises from the combinations of these three levels.

According to Hofstede, *values* are the core of every culture (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21). They represent our overall preference for certain situations over others. Values are feelings that lean towards positive and negative poles, such as good and evil, dangerous and safe, ugly and beautiful, irrational and rational, and so on. They are acquired at an early age and often remain unconscious and hidden. However, they significantly influence our actions. Rituals, heroes and symbols are the visible manifestations of these values (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 9).

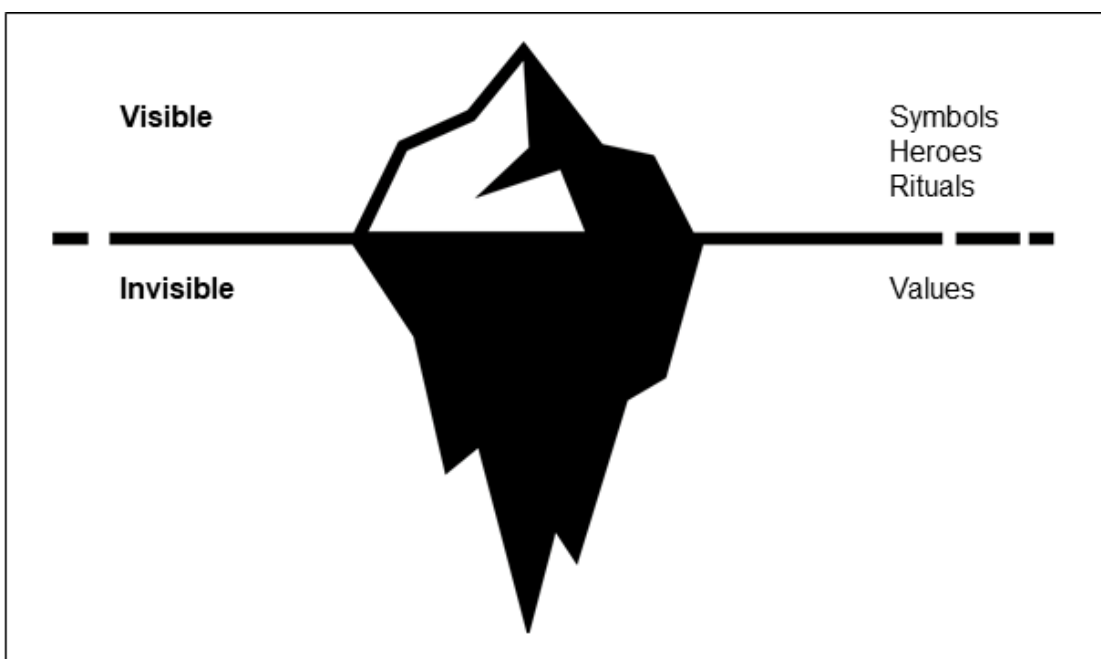
Rituals encompass collective activities that do not have a specific objective, but are considered socially necessary. Examples of typical rituals include religious customs and various forms of greetings (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 9).

Heroes, whether real or fictional, deceased or alive, are individuals highly esteemed in a culture due to their qualities and are therefore regarded as role models (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 8).

Symbols can be expressed in words, gestures, pictures, or objects, and can only be recognized as such by those who are part of the same culture. This includes certain expressions, language, clothing, status symbols, and so on.

The so-called iceberg model, first proposed by Edward T. Hall (1976), can be used to illustrate the invisible values of a culture and its visible manifestations.

Figure 2: Iceberg Model of Culture



Source: Own illustration based on (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 8)

The illustration highlights that culture encompasses both visible aspect (such as symbols, heroes, and rituals), which are position above the 'waterline', and invisible elements, represented by the underlying values that remain hidden beneath the surface of the model.

In summary, the purpose of culture is to teach us how to think about and deal with certain situations. It guides us through life (Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 12).

2.2 Cultural Differences

Cultural differences primarily refer to variation in values, which are the core of culture (Hofstede, 1984, p. 21; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181; Reisinger, 2009, p. 123). People who share similar values are part of the same culture, whereas those with differing values belong to different cultures (Reisinger, 2009, p. 123). According to Hofstede (2010), these disparities arise from the different environments in which people grew up in. Consequently, their mental programming varies, ultimately leading to cultural differences among various groups (p. 5).

These cultural differences manifest themselves in various ways (Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 16). They can be observed, among other things, in communication styles, social categories such as interpersonal relationships, hierarchy, and responsibilities, as well as in the rules governing social behavior, such as greetings, display of emotions, and the expression of dissatisfaction or criticism (Reisinger, 2009, pp. 120-122).

Such cultural differences can cause challenges in social interactions between individual from different cultural backgrounds, including misinterpretations, misunderstanding, and confusion (Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 21).

2.3 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

The concept of cultural dimensions arises from the numerous variations in various aspects among cultural groups. They provide a framework for understanding how people from different cultures behave and communicate. Several researchers, such as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, Edward T. Hall, and Trompenaar, have conducted extensive studies aiming to identify dimensions that highlight the similarities and differences between national cultures

(Reisinger, 2009, p. 127). Among these researchers, Geert Hofstede, whose work has particularly stood out and garnered significant attention (Reisinger, 2009, p. 147). To him, a dimension refers to “an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 7).

Hofstede’s revolutionary study on worker’s values in over 50 countries was published in 1980. His research relied on an extensive dataset of more than 100,000 questionnaires that were completed by employees from IBM, a renowned multinational company. By performing a factor analysis on the data, Hofstede identified four distinct dimensions that highlighted cultural variations among the different countries: *power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism versus collectivism*, and *masculinity versus femininity* (Hofstede, 2011, pp. 6-7).

In the 1980s, a fifth dimension called *long-term versus short-term orientation* was added, based on research conducted by the Canadian psychologist Michael Harris Bond, which focused on the Far East (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 37-38).

Subsequently, in the 2000s, Bulgarian scholar Michael Minkov's research, utilizing data from the World Values Survey, enabled a reevaluation of the fifth dimension and the introduction of a sixth dimension, known as *indulgence versus restraint* (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 44-45).

Hofstede assigned a score to each dimension for every country on a scale ranging from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the more prevalent that dimension is within a society (Reisinger, 2009, p. 139). Moreover, each country is positioned on each scale in relation to other countries (De Mooij & Hofstede, *The Hofstede Model: Applications to Global Branding and Advertising Strategy and Research*, 2010, p. 88). Below is a brief explanation of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions:

Power Distance (PDI)

This dimension addresses the inherent inequality among individuals within societies and reflects the cultural attitude towards these disparities (Hofstede, 2011, p. 6). Power distance is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 61).

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

The dimension of uncertainty avoidance refers to the level of stress experienced by a society when facing an uncertain future. Various cultures developed distinct approaches to cope with this anxiety. The extent to which members of a society have created ways to circumvent these situations, for example through codes of conduct, laws, and rules, is reflected in the score of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 191). It is crucial to clarify that uncertainty avoidance should not be mistaken with risk avoidance, as they are not the same (Hofstede, 2011, p. 10).

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

This dimension revolves around the level of interdependence that exists within a society among its members. In *individualistic* societies, people are expected to primarily focus on themselves and their immediate family. Whereas, in *collectivist* societies, individuals are part of ‘in-groups’ that offer support in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 92).

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

A society is labeled as *masculine* when it exhibits characteristics of competition, achievement, and success, along with clearly defined gender roles. In contrast, a society is considered *feminine* when there is an overlap of emotional gender roles, and the prevailing societal values revolve around

caring for others and the quality of life (Country Comparison Tool, n.d.; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 140).

Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation (LTO)

Societies characterized by a *long-term orientation* emphasize the cultivation of behaviors that are geared towards future rewards, particularly perseverance and thrift. In contrast, societies with a *short-term orientation* prioritize virtues associated with the past and present, such as respect for tradition, the preservation of social status, and the fulfillment of social obligations (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 239).

Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

This dimension concerns the degree to which basic human desires related to enjoying life are either celebrated or regulated. *Indulgence* represents the tendency to allow relatively unrestrained satisfaction of natural human desires associated with pleasure and enjoyment. On the contrary, *restraint* reflects the belief that such gratification should be limited and governed by rigid social norms (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, p. 281).

An analysis of cultural average scores and rankings across different countries indicates, that Western countries, in general, display characteristics such as low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, a strong emphasis on individualism, and a short-term orientation. Eastern countries, on the other hand, tend to have high power distance, significant uncertainty avoidance, a strong emphasis on collectivism, and a long-term orientation. However, the dimension of masculinity versus femininity does not show a uniform tendency, as it is observed in varying degrees in both Western and Asian countries (Manrai & Manrai, 2011b, p. 27).

2.3.1 Criticism of Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Although the Hofstede cultural dimensions are widely acknowledged in the realm of social science research, they have not escaped criticism. The following is a selection of some points of criticism:

Despite the impressive sample size of Hofstede's study, the fact that it exclusively focuses on employees from a single company significantly diminished the external validity of its findings. Consequently, the study's results can only be confidently applied to IBM employees and, at most, individuals belonging to the middle class. Another undeniable drawback is the gender bias within the sample, with approximately 90% of participants being men. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that a study confined to one company cannot accurately represent the cultural dynamics of an entire country (Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, pp. 139-140; McSweeney, 2002, p. 101; Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 109).

Secondly, the use of countries as the objective of study when examining culture has been criticized. While cultural groups often extend beyond national borders, Hofstede's work equates culture with nations, which fails to account for the complexity of cultural diversity within and across countries. In reality, people live in interconnected societies with increasing networks of exchange and communication, resulting in fragmented cultures that transcend national boundaries. Research demonstrates that relying solely on a person's country of origin or nationality is insufficient to understand their cultural attributes, given the multicultural populations and diverse ethnic units found in most countries (Baskerville, 2003, pp. 6-8; McSweeney, 2002, pp. 110-111; Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, pp. 139-140; Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 109).

Furthermore, the survey method used in Geert Hofstede's study has faced criticism due to its lack of a theoretical framework. Rather than being guided by an established theoretical basis, the concept of culture emerges from analyzing survey results (Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, p. 139). Consequently, the

dimensions derived from this analysis, are subject to his subjective interpretations, raising concerns about potential biases (Schmid, 1996, p. 260; Reisinger & Turner, 2003, p. 109).

Within the field of comparative cultural sciences, there is skepticism about the suitability of the questionnaire method as a whole. It is argued that this method is unable to capture the complex social reality and, specifically, the nuances of values in a valid manner. To obtain a deeper understanding, more sensitive survey methods such as ethnography would be necessary (Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, p. 141; Reisinger, 2009, p. 143).

Besides, the expansion of the model from four to six dimensions receives criticism, primarily due to the dataset used, which was collected several decades after the original IBM dataset and lacks methodological comparability (Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, p. 145).

And it is worth noting that the lack of clear differentiation between the dimensions in Hofstede's model has been criticized. Authors point out the existence of interrelationships and overlaps between the dimensions that arise from shared issues or commonalities (Schmid, 1996, p. 261).

Lastly, there have been criticisms regarding the relevance of the study due to its age and the dynamic nature of the modern world characterized by rapid changes, globalization, and convergence. It is argued that culture and values may have undergone significant transformations since the study was conducted, and therefore, Hofstede's dimensions may no longer accurately reflect the current cultural landscape and potentially are outdated (Blom & Meier, 2002, p. 56; Müller & Gelbrich, 2015, pp. 143-144; Reisinger, 2009, p. 147).

3.3.2 Relevance of Hofstede Dimensions in Cross-Cultural Studies

Although the validity of the Hofstede model has been widely criticized, it remains the most extensive and influential study to date. One factor

contributing to the widespread adoption of Hofstede's cultural classification is the simplicity of its dimensions, which are easily grasped and appealing to both scholars and business professionals (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, pp. 87-88). Moreover, when comparing various models that measure cultural differences, it becomes evident that the recent frameworks have made limited advancements in comparison to Hofstede's pioneering research. Thus, Hofstede's data remains valid (Magnusson, Wilson, Zdravkovic, Zhou, & Westjohn, 2008, p. 196). Furthermore, the Country Comparison Tool on Hofstede Insights continues to incorporate new countries and their corresponding dimensions. The tool was last updated in 2020 (Country Comparison Tool, n.d.).

3.4 Measuring Cultural Distance

Several approaches have been created to measure numerical dissimilarities between cultures, such as the cultural distance index developed by Kogut and Singh (1988) and the cultural diversity index introduced by Jackson (2001).

Kogut and Singh's (1988) cultural distance index

The cultural distance index developed by Kogut and Singh (1988) is considered the most common approach for quantifying cultural distance (Ng, Lee, & Soutar, 2007, p. 1500). It is derived from secondary data on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. and is considered a straightforward, standardized, tangible, convenient and quantitative tool for measuring the overall cultural disparity between two countries. Kogut and Singh's (1988) cultural distance index is determined by calculating the arithmetic average of the variance-adjusted differences between the host country and the destination country, using Hofstede's dimensions of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity. However, the index does not incorporate the two relatively new cultural dimensions of long-term versus short-term orientation and indulgence-restraint. The formula for calculating the cultural distance index is expressed algebraically as:

$$CD_j = \sum_{i=1}^4 \left\{ (I_{ij} - I_{ia})^2 / V_i \right\} / n,$$

where CD_j represent the cultural differences between the j th country and the a th country. I_{ij} represents the Hofstede's score for the i th cultural dimension in the j th country, while I_{ia} represents the Hofstede's score for the i th cultural dimension in the a th country. V_i represents the variance of the index on the i th dimension, while n represents the number of cultural dimensions (Kogut & Singh, 1988, p. 422).

Although the index theoretically ranges from 0 (indicating the lowest cultural distance) to 17.93 (indicating the highest cultural distance), the countries included in Hofstede's (1980) study have a narrower range. The range spans from 0.02 (cultural distance index Australia and the USA) to 8.22 (cultural distance index Japan and Sweden). The reason is, that no single country has the lowest or highest scores in all cultural dimensions (Ng, Lee, & Soutar, 2007, p. 1500).

Jackson's (2001) cultural diversity index

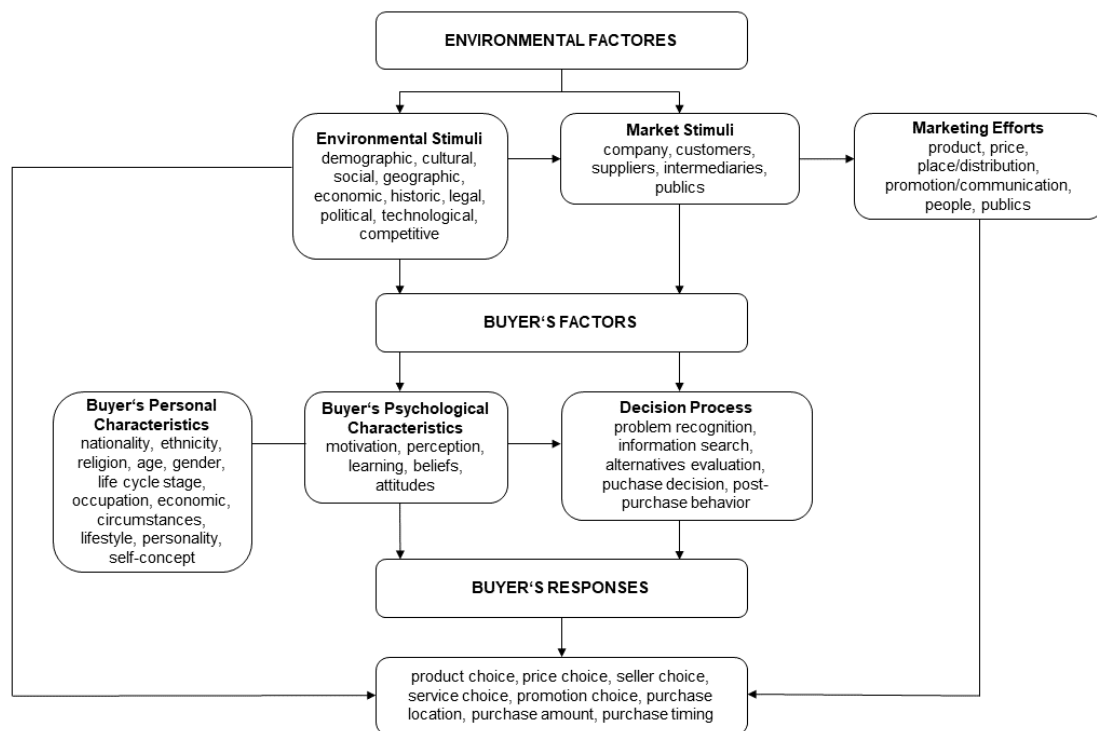
Jackson's (2001) cultural diversity index is also a straightforward and user-friendly approach. He calculated cultural differences by summing the absolute rank differences for each of Hofstede's four cultural value dimensions, namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-femininity. Jackson also examined the 50 countries that were included in Hofstede's (1980) research. He assigned each country a score between 1 and 50 based on Hofstede's ranking. The absolute rank difference was then calculated for each dimension between the destination country and the country of origin. The cultural diversity index is then derived by adding up the absolute rank differences for all four dimensions. The index theoretically ranges from 4 (a score indicating very similar cultures) to 196 (a score indicating significant cultural dissimilarity) (Ng, Lee, & Soutar, 2007, p. 1501; Reisinger, 2009, p. 113).

3.5 Travel Behavior

At its core, tourist behavior can be described as a form of consumption behavior that involves the actions taken by consumers when they engage in the purchase, utilization, and disposing of tourist services (Juvan, Omerzel, & Maravic, 2017, p. 23). Tourism services have special characteristics, such as intangibility, which presents a challenge for their marketing and distribution (Juvan, Omerzel, & Maravic, 2017, p. 23; Freyer, 2011, p. 94).

The process of consumer buying behavior is influenced by several factors. Reisinger (2009, p. 290) has developed a flow chart, shown in Figure 3, to visually represent the structure and impact of these factors.

Figure 3: Consumer Buying Behavior Process



Source: (Reisinger, 2009, p. 290)

The process of consumer buying behavior is shaped by various factors, including environmental factors, such as: external stimuli that lie outside the control of the consumer, such as culture, market stimuli that marketing managers are in charge of, and marketing efforts. Furthermore, the process is

influenced by buyer-related factors, including personal and psychological characteristics. Both, the personal and psychological aspects of the buyer, influence the decision process. Finally, the buyer' characteristics and their decision-making process shape and influence their responses to the purchase (Reisinger, 2009, pp. 289-291). From the perspective of tourists, this refers to the purchase of travel services.

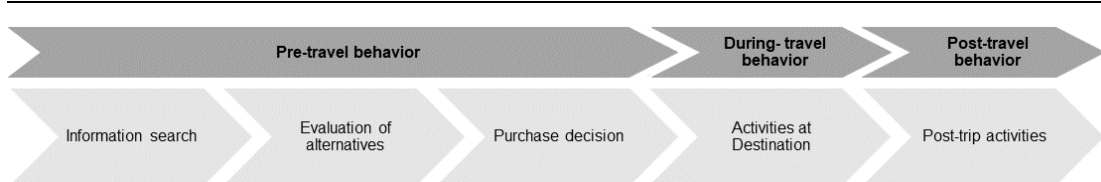
The decision to travel is typically a multi-faceted one. It includes, among other things, the decision regarding the destination, mode of transport, accommodation, as well as decisions regarding the organization of free time during the trip (Schmücker, 2007, p. 177). Therefore, the travel decision is characterized by an extensive buying process and a significant amount of time spent on decision-making (Kühn, 2022, p. 80). There are many approaches for modeling this intricate travel decision process. The fundamental consideration is always that the process starts long before the actual decision is made and extends beyond it, encompassing related activities after the purchase (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong, & Saunders, 2011, p. 298; Hofbauer & Dürr, 2007, pp. 19-20).

The decision-making process encompasses five significant steps. It begins with the recognition of a need caused by a discrepancy between the current and desired situation. In the context of tourism, this need could revolve around seeking a relaxing vacation experience. Once potential buyers acknowledge the need to make a purchase, they proceed to gather information regarding various products or tourism services, marking the information search phase. The evaluation of the various alternatives found during the information search takes place in the third phase. This leads to the purchase decision. In the post-purchase behavior phase, buyers assess their satisfaction with the acquired product or service and make future decisions, such as revisiting a destination or writing a review (Reisinger, 2009, pp. 305-318; Horster, 2013, p. 73).

A tourism product consists of three main components: pre-trip activities, the actual trip, and post-trip activities. Before the trip, the tourist seeks information, evaluates them, and makes a purchase decision. The travel experience itself begins and ends with the departure and arrival, and includes activities at the destination. After the trip, tourists evaluate their travel experience, provide feedback or ratings, and may recommend it to others or choose to revisit the destination themselves (Horster, 2022, p. 32).

Combining these concepts, one can assume the existence of pre-travel behavior, during-travel behavior, and post-travel behavior (see figure 4).

Figure 4: Linear Representation of Travel Behavior



Source: Own illustration based on (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2010; Reisinger, 2009; Horster, 2022)

Pre-travel behavior encompasses all the stages from need recognition to booking the trip. All actions related to product consumption and purchases at the destination are considered during-travel behavior. Post-travel behavior includes the evaluation of the purchase and consumption experiences by the consumer, including complaint behavior, and intention to revisit.

Not to mention that each of these behaviors is influenced by culture both directly and indirectly (Manrai & Manrai, 2011a, p. 170; Reisinger, 2009, p. 290).

4 Methodology

In order to investigate the impact of cultural differences on tourism behavior, a systematic literature review focusing on Hofstede's cultural dimensions is conducted. This qualitative research approach entails a secondary survey, where existing data is gathered and synthesized, rather than conducting original research or surveys typically done in a primary survey.

The research question guided the selection of search terms, including *Hofstede*, *Hofstede's cultural dimensions*, and *travel behavior*. Additionally, synonyms and related terms such as *tourist behavior* and the specific cultural dimensions (*power distance*, *uncertainty avoidance*, *individualism*, *masculinity*, *long-term orientation*, and *indulgence*) were utilized. However, the term *cultural differences* as well as its synonyms were intentionally excluded to focus solely on journal articles examining the impact of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. These search terms were combined to create search strings, forming connections between individual terms. Multiple searches were conducted using different combinations of the keywords, as seen in table 1.

Table 1: Search Terms and Strings

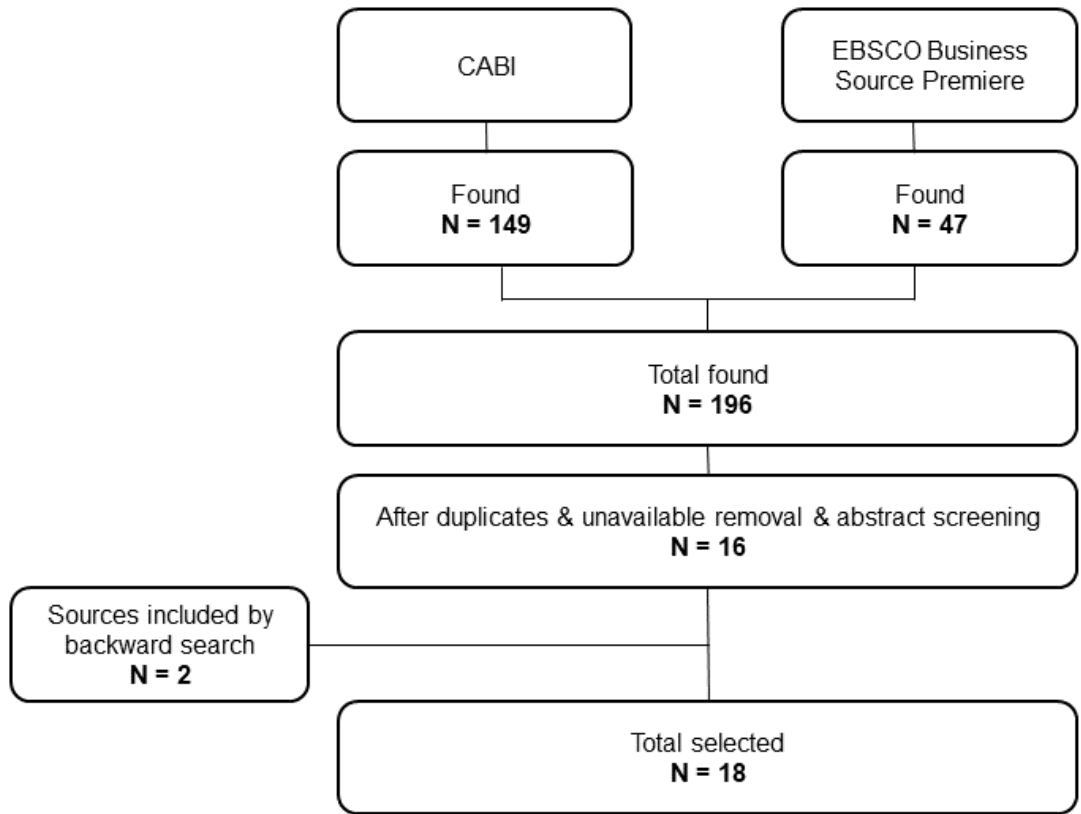
Search term 1		Search term 2
Hofstede OR Hofstede's cultural dimension OR power distance OR uncertainty avoidance OR individualism OR masculinity OR long-term orientation OR indulgence	AND	travel behavior OR tourist behavior

Source: Own illustration

For the literature search, the CABI database was selected as it encompasses a comprehensive collection of global literature on various topics such as tourism, leisure, recreation, sport, and culture. Additionally, EBSCO Business Source Premiere was chosen, which offers searchable bibliographic records

and full-text access to well-known journals across diverse business sectors, including tourism.

Figure 5: Literature Selection Process



Source: Own illustration

As seen in figure 3, the initial database search yielded a total of 196 research papers. From this pool, duplicate articles were removed. Additionally, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied, considering only articles available in full text and written in English. Literature reviews by others were also excluded. The publication date was not specified, as imposing such a constraint would have significantly restricted the available literature. It is assumed that cultural research retains its validity over extended periods (Magnusson, Wilson, Zdravkovic, Zhou, & Westjohn, 2008). After eliminating articles that did not meet the criteria and assessing the suitability of the abstracts, a final set of 16 journal articles remained.

Using backward search, which involves reviewing the bibliographies of relevant articles from the previously selected literature, further sources were sought. This process led to the inclusion of an additional criterion, specifying that only research papers within the realm of tourism would be taken into account. This search resulted in a considerable number of new sources. However, the full text of many of them was not available. In an attempt to access the full text PDF files, requests were made to the respective authors via ResearchGate, a platform for researchers across different fields of study. Unfortunately, these efforts proved unsuccessful. Consequently, only two additional sources could be incorporated. As a result, a total of 18 sources are available for the literature review (cf. Appendix A).

5 The Influence of Culture on Travel Behavior

The results of the literature review are presented, analyzed and finally interpreted in the following chapter. As elaborated in the theoretical part of this bachelor thesis, it is assumed, that travel behavior includes various pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel behaviors (cf. ch. 2.5, figure 4). The research papers are grouped according to the corresponding aspect of travel behavior about which they provide information.

3.1 Pre-Travel Behavior

Information Search and Sources of Information

Money and Crofts (2003) examined in their study the influence of uncertainty avoidance on various aspects, including information search, trip planning, travel party characteristics, and trip characteristics. Regarding information search, their study revealed that individuals with higher levels of uncertainty avoidance were more inclined to seek information from marketer-dominated mass media channels such as advertisements, tourist organization websites, and tourist offices. In contrast, individuals with higher tolerance for uncertainty tended to rely on personal sources for obtaining information.

A study conducted by Amaro and Duarte (2017) focused on examining the use of social media for travel, comparing the behavior of citizens from Great Britain and Portugal. The study discovered that Portuguese travelers were more likely to search for information before their travels and utilize social media platforms to gather information about attractions at the destinations, activities, accommodations, and so on, both prior to and during their journeys. This inclination was attributed to Portugal's high level of uncertainty avoidance, as it strives to minimize the likelihood of encountering uncertain situations. Furthermore, in collectivist cultures like Portugal, the opinions of others are considered more important. Hence, social media platforms serve as valuable sources for Portuguese travelers, allowing them to access the experiences and recommendations of others.

Cassidy and Pabel (2019) conducted a study to explore the influence of country of residence and cultural factors on the level of trust individuals have in tourism rating websites. Specifically, they examined the trust levels among respondents from India, Australia, Malaysia, and Canada. The researchers found that Australians, who possess a low long-term orientation and thus have a normative culture, exhibited the lowest level of trust in travel review websites. On the other hand, respondents from Canada, characterized by a higher long-term orientation, displayed a greater trust in the information provided by these websites. This trend continued with Malaysia, where a higher long-term orientation was associated with increased trust in travel review websites. From these findings, it can be implied that there is a positive correlation between higher long-term orientation and increased trust.

Trip Planning

In terms of travel planning, Money and Crotts (2003) revealed, that cultures characterized by a higher level of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to seek assistance from professionals, and ask for package travel offers. Interestingly, the researchers did not find a significant correlation between uncertainty avoidance and the act of booking a trip. They suggest, that uncertainty-averse individuals require more time and deliberation in the decision-making process before booking a trip, while those with higher uncertainty tolerance embrace the planning phase and allocate extra time for it.

However, when Cassidy and Pabel (2019) conducted a study examining, among other things, the impact of uncertainty avoidance on the duration of travel planning prior to embarking on a trip, their findings showed a correlation between higher levels of uncertainty avoidance and extended planning periods for both domestic and international trips. In essence, individuals with a greater tendency to avoid uncertainty were inclined to spend more time organizing and preparing for their journeys using travel review websites.

Backhaus et al. (2022) also carried out a research with the objective of understanding the factors that impact the duration between pre-trip activities and the start of the actual journey. The study discovered that individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation exhibit a positive correlation with the planning horizon for international travel. In other words, cultures that are more individualistic, have a greater inclination to avoid uncertainty, and prioritize long-term goals tend to have a longer planning horizon for their trips.

Trip Characteristics

Pizam and Sussmann (1995) conducted a survey among British tour guides to gather their insights on the behavioral traits exhibited by Japanese, French, Italian, and American tourists during guided tours. The findings indicated that the individualistic nature and low uncertainty avoidance tendencies of American tourists played a significant role in shaping their travel-related behavior, such as opting for longer trips. In contrast, the collectivist tendencies and high uncertainty avoidance of Japanese tourists were found to explain their travel-related behavior, including traveling in groups and strict trip planning. These behaviors are attributed to provide tourists with a sense of security and mitigate perceived uncertainty associated with their travels.

Money and Crofts (2003) came to similar conclusions. According to them, tourists from cultures with high uncertainty avoidance typically show a preference for traveling in groups. Moreover, they visit fewer destinations during their trip and have shorter durations of stay. In contrast, tourists who display lower levels of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to travel alone, have longer trips, and visit more places while travelling.

Choosing a Destination

Jackson (2001) investigated how cultural factors influence the choice of travel destination among 21 countries in the Pacific Rim region. He proposes that people from strongly individualistic cultures tend to choose culturally similar

destinations, whereas those from highly collectivistic countries tend to opt for culturally dissimilar ones.

Selecting an Accommodation

A study by Cho (2001) delved into the factors that Japanese and American guests prioritize when selecting a hotel. The findings revealed that Japanese guests, who exhibit a higher power distance, place greater importance on a hotel's prestige and reputation compared to their American counterparts. Consequently, they are more inclined to choose hotels with higher service standards and star ratings. Additionally, when making hotel choices, collectivist Japanese guests attach significant importance to all-inclusive rates that cover additional services, leisure activities, entertainment, and meals for their entire group. Conversely, American guests do not share the same level of importance placed on this aspect. Furthermore, Japanese guests, who are more uncertainty-averse, prioritize both safety and reliability more than American guests. Safety considerations include knowledge of the hotel's location and its safety features. Reliability, on the other hand, is reflected in the preference for a hotel brand from their own country and a preference for staff who can communicate in their native language.

Bacsi and Szanati (2021) investigated the impact of multiple cultural dimensions on tourists' interest in spending domestic camping holidays. The popularity of camping tends to be higher in countries with smaller power distance, where the population embraces more feminine values and demonstrates a higher tolerance for uncertainty. These national traits are also associated with a greater sensitivity towards the environment. Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between the preference for camping and individuality, as well as indulgence. However, countries with higher emphasis on long-term orientation tend to exhibit a lower preference for camping holidays. Regarding the campsite nights spent by domestic tourists, there is a significant negative relationship with higher levels of masculinity and long-term

orientation. Interestingly, countries with a higher power distance, or individualistic orientation, and a greater level of indulgence tend to have a higher share of camping nights.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Lee et al. (2021) examined the influence of culture on the utilization of Airbnb and shared accommodations. It was found, that individuals with high uncertainty avoidance are expected to have negative attitudes towards booking on Airbnb, as the service is unique and non-standardized compared to hotels. Since Airbnb focuses on interaction with strangers, a high level of trust is required, which individuals with a low tolerance for the unknown are unlikely to be able to demonstrate. Individualists prioritize privacy, in contrast to collectivists, and perceive a reduced sense of privacy when utilizing Airbnb services, and consequently do not prefer using such services. Moreover, individuals from long-term oriented cultures are more concerned about future costs, preferring value-saving and sustainable consumption, which aligns with the core values of the sharing economy. In contrast to indulgence-oriented individuals who are open to fun and unique experiences and thus find services like Airbnb appealing, people from restrictive-oriented cultures tend to concentrate on the negative aspects. As a result, they develop a negative attitude towards accommodation sharing services.

3.2 During-Travel Behavior

Activities in Destination

The survey by Pizam and Sussmann (1995) revealed that tourists from individualistic cultures with low uncertainty avoidance tend to prefer action-oriented tourism. In contrast, tourists from collectivist countries with high uncertainty avoidance tend to prefer safer activities

Rinuastuti (2015) published a study examining the cultural and behavioral differences between Australian and Indonesian tourists visiting Lombok, an Indonesian island. He concluded that individuals with low uncertainty

avoidance and individualistic values tend to exhibit higher levels of openness towards new experiences, including people and the environment. They also display a greater willingness to engage in adventurous activities and participate in various endeavors to fulfill their individual goals. Moreover, individuals with low uncertainty avoidance, low long-term orientation, and low power distance values demonstrated a strong intention to interact with tourists from other countries. Conversely, those with collectivist orientation values and high uncertainty avoidance displayed a higher behavioral intention to purchase souvenirs or handicrafts at tourist sites, buy gifts for the ones that stayed at home, and engage in overall shopping activities.

Moreover, in recent times, the tourism and hospitality industry has been using advanced technologies like augmented reality (AR) to provide tourists with enhanced experiences. In this context, the study conducted by Jung et al. (2020) examines the role of long-term and short-term orientation in terms of AR application use and users' perceived value. The findings highlight that South Korean tourists, representing the long-term orientation culture, highly value the educational aspects of AR applications. On the other hand, Irish tourists, representing the short-term orientation culture, place significant importance on the escapist experiences provided by AR applications.

3.3 Post-Travel Behavior

Satisfaction

A study by Matilla (1999) examines the perception and evaluation of hotel services among Asian and Western travelers. According to her findings, Asian cultures tend to embrace significant power distances and, consequently, expect status differences between customers and service staff. As a result, they do not want brief and routine interactions that minimize the significance of these status differences. Instead, they desire longer and more comprehensive service encounters that acknowledge and reinforce these distinctions.

Crotts and Erdmann (2000) examined the satisfaction of international travelers with airline ticket prices and airline services, analyzing it through the lens of the masculinity dimension. The study identified significant variations in service ratings between individuals from low masculinity and high masculinity cultures. Members of cultures with a higher femininity dimension rated airline services more positively, exhibited a higher likelihood of reporting satisfaction, and demonstrated greater loyalty towards airlines. Conversely, individuals from highly masculine cultures evaluated airline service quality more unfavorably, were more likely to express dissatisfaction, and displayed lower loyalty towards airlines.

A study by Huang and Crotts (2019) examined the relationship between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and tourist' overall satisfaction. The findings revealed significant correlations between various dimensions. Tourists from countries characterized by high power distance tend to exhibit lower levels of satisfaction. This can be attributed to social class disparities, mentioned by Matilla (1999). Moreover, Huang and Crotts discovered that tourists from countries with high scores in masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation also tend to express lower levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, visitors from countries with a high score in individualism and higher scores in indulgence display higher levels of satisfaction. The study further suggests a positive relationship between individualism and uncertainty avoidance, implying that tourists from socially extroverted societies are more receptive to the social contrasts and uncertainties associated with international travel. However, the relationship between uncertainty avoidance scores and satisfaction appears to be less consistent and robust. Finally, Crotts and Huang estimate that national culture can account for approximately 8 to 10% of the total variance in visitor satisfaction (2019, p. 240).

Zhang et al. (2020) also conducted a study to assess how national culture influences guests' evaluation of their hotel experience. Using a big data approach, they analyzed 25,480 guest reviews from five different countries

pertaining to 1,533 hotels in Paris. The study examined the aspects of value, room quality, location, cleanliness, and service. The results indicated that, in general, individuals from individualistic, long-term oriented, indulgent, and high uncertainty avoiding cultures tended to prioritize the tangible aspects of their hotel experience. For example, guests from individualistic countries emphasized the importance of the room and its features, as it serves as their private retreat. In contrast, guests from uncertainty avoidant cultures placed more importance on cleanliness. Guests from indulgent cultures prioritize the location of the hotel, aiming to ensure convenient access to local attractions. In contrast, guests from masculine, short-term oriented, and low uncertainty avoiding cultures demonstrated a greater emphasis on the intangible aspects. The significance of value was found to increase among guests from masculine cultures, as they prioritize achievement and material rewards. Consequently, they exhibited a tendency to seek out the best deals. Additionally, guests from short-term oriented cultures displayed a heightened emphasis on service compared to their long-term oriented counterparts.

Criticism and Complain Behavior

According to Ergün and Kitapci's study (2018), societies characterized by high power distance tend to exhibit a higher inclination towards expressing dissatisfaction to hotel management (public action) and engaging in word-of-mouth communication (private action). Interestingly, their research also revealed a strong correlation between high power distance and no action. The researchers attribute this phenomenon to the hierarchical structure prevalent in societies with high power distance. Customers occupying higher positions within the hierarchy utilize their power to publicly address their dissatisfaction by reporting complaints to hotel management or resorting to legal measure, whereas customers in lower positions remain silent. Furthermore, Ergün and Kitapci observed that individuals belonging to the uncertainty avoidance dimension tend to prefer private action when dissatisfied. In such societies, it is more common to respond with positive feedback when service quality is

high. Additionally, the researchers noted that collectivist cultures, emphasizing social harmony and loyalty, are more likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth and share their dissatisfying experiences with friends and family. Conversely, in individualistic cultures, consumers tend to prioritize seeking compensation for poor service.

Liu & McClure (2001) conducted a study examining cross-cultural differences in consumer complaint intentions and behavior, which yielded similar findings. In individualistic cultures, consumers tend to exhibit more public behavior, such as directly discussing their concerns with a manager, demanding action, and even taking to legal actions. Conversely, in collectivist cultures, tourists engage in negative word-of-mouth communication to discourage their family and friends from using the service, aiming to prevent them from having a similar negative experience. Additionally, they are less likely to use the service again themselves.

Cassidy and Pabel (2019) discovered a noteworthy cultural distinction in the behavior of posting evaluations on travel review websites between individualistic and collectivist countries. The respondents from collectivist societies, such as India and Malaysia, were more likely to leave reviews for their holidays compared to respondents from individualistic societies like Australia and Canada. This disparity can be attributed to the fact that individuals from collectivist countries are more motivated to assist fellow travelers by sharing their experiences through reviews.

Loyalty and Intention to Revisit

The study of Risitano et al. (2017) aims to investigate how national cultural values influence tourists' behavior, particularly in terms of their experiences, satisfaction, and intention to revisit a destination. The study revealed that travelers from cultures characterized by individualism or lower uncertainty avoidance tend to be less inclined to praise a destination. Additionally, they are less likely to consider revisiting the same destination. The researchers

attributed this tendency to their adventurous nature, which drives them to explore new destinations rather than return to familiar ones. In contrast, individuals from collectivist societies demonstrate a greater focus on brand and price considerations. They make decisions after having looked at a broader range of information sources, and as a result, they are generally more inclined to recommend a destination. Likewise, individuals from countries with lower tolerance for uncertainty are more prone to recommending a destination. This cultural dimension also exhibits a stronger impact on the intention to revisit a destination, as those who score high on this dimension believe they can exert greater control over unexpected situations during future visits.

3.4 Analysis and Interpretation of Literature Review

In Table 2, the relationship between Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and various aspects of travel behavior is illustrated. These connections were identified through a literature review conducted in the previous chapters.

Table 2: Relationship Cultural Dimensions and Travel Behavior

	Pre-travel behavior					During-travel behavior	Post-travel behavior		
	PrT1	PrT2	PrT3	PrT4	PrT5	DT1	PoT1	PoT2	PoT3
PDI					X	X	X	X	
UAI	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
IDV	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAS					X		X	X	X
LTO	X	X			X	X	X		
IND					X		X		

Source: Own illustration

The abbreviations in the table represent different tourist behaviors. Pre-travel behaviors are represented by PrT1 to PrT5, encompassing information search

and sources of information (PrT1), trip planning (PrT2), trip characteristics (PrT3), choosing a destination (PrT4), and selecting an accommodation (PrT5). DT1 refers to travel behavior during the trip, specifically activities in destination. Post-travel behaviors are indicated by PoT1 to PoT3, which include satisfaction (PoT1), criticism and complain behavior (PoT2), and loyalty and intention to revisit (PoT3).

The summary presented in table 2 provides valuable insights into the extent to which Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be applied to different domains of travel behavior. However, the foremost conclusion drawn is that culture holds utmost significance in comprehending tourist behavior across all domains of travel behavior. The influence of culture on traveler behavior extends from information seeking to decision-making, choice behavior regarding accommodations and destinations, on-site activities, and various aspects of post-travel behavior, including satisfaction and intentions to revisit.

Furthermore, the dimensions of individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance turn out to be the most influential cultural features on travel behavior prior to, during, and after the journey. Individualism exerts its influence across all aspects of travel behavior, while uncertainty avoidance affects all domains except destination choice. Given that making a travel decision is inherently considered a risky purchase decision, it is not surprising that the uncertainty avoidance plays a significant role in travel behavior (Kühn, 2022, p. 80). The reduction of perceived risk related to travel is there clearly correlated with the uncertainty avoidance dimension. Particularly for people with a low propensity for risk, indicating a high level of uncertainty avoidance, this reduction is achieved through uncertainty-reducing measures like intensifying information seeking, choosing to travel with a larger party size, or booking prepacked tours.

The dimension of masculinity versus femininity appears to manifest specifically in the selection of accommodation and post-trip travel behavior. This

observation can be attributed to the characteristics associated with masculine cultures, such as an emphasis on status and achievement. These characteristics are thought to be a factor in higher expectations and stricter evaluation standards (Reisinger, 2009, p. 339). Additionally, because of those traits, individuals from masculine cultures are more inclined to prefer hotel accommodations rather than budget-friendly options (Reisinger, 2009, p. 323).

Moreover, the literature review uncovered a research gap regarding the dimension of indulgence versus restraint (cf. Appendix A). This can be largely attributed to the relatively recent discovery of this dimension (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010, pp. 44-45). Yet, it seems that this dimension holds a lot of potential for explaining travel behavior. Specifically, because individuals from countries characterized by higher levels of restraint exhibit lower levels of participation in leisure and recreational activities compared to individuals from countries characterized by higher levels of indulgence, as indicated by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010, p. 291).

To conclude, conducting a comprehensive comparison of the Hofstede dimensions in a structured manner proved challenging due to the heterogeneous nature of the studies in terms of their research objectives. Furthermore, a combination of two dimensions was found to provide better explanations for variations in product usage and other consumption-related phenomena, including travel behavior (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010, p. 102).

However, this does not imply that no travel patterns can be derived from the literature research. The following case study examining the travel behavior of German and Dutch tourists aims to demonstrate this.

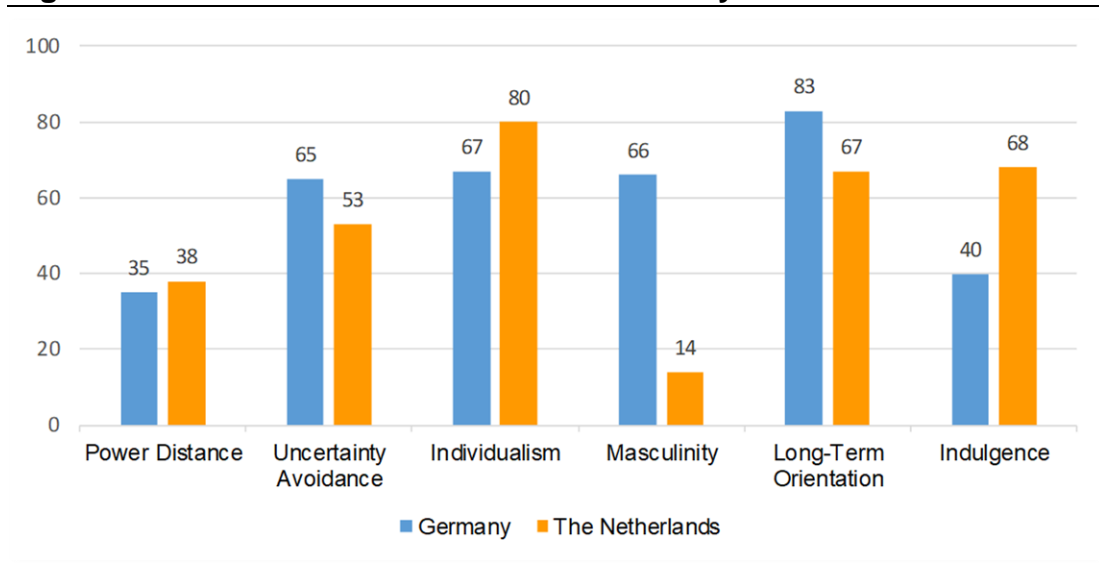
4 Case Study: German and Dutch Travel Behavior

For the case study, German and Dutch tourist are to be compared, as the Netherlands continues to be the most significant source market for German tourism (DZT, 2022, p. 9; DZT, 2023, p. 16). Furthermore, the Netherlands is also one of the top ten tourist destinations for German travelers (Deutscher Reiseverband, 2023, p. 18). Understanding Dutch culture can improve communication, enable German tourism businesses to customize their offerings to the specific needs and expectations of Dutch tourists, prevent potential misunderstandings and conflicts, and promote positive interactions. This can result in a more pleasant and satisfying travel experience for Dutch tourists, potentially increasing their loyalty and intention to return. In the opposite direction, the same holds true.

4.1 Cultural Comparison

While the differences between Asian and Western cultures are the most obvious, other cultures, such as those of the Netherlands and Germany, also exhibit some degree of dissimilarity (Reisinger, 2009, p. 112). The illustration below presents the factual information.

Figure 6: Cultural Dimensions of Germany and the Netherlands



Source: Own illustration based on (Country Comparison Tool, n.d.)

Power Distance

Both Germany (score 35) and the Netherlands (score 38) are characterized by a fairly low power distance.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Germany is classified as a country with a high preference for uncertainty avoidance measures, scoring 65 on this dimension. On the other hand, the Netherlands scores 53, indicating a slight preference for uncertainty avoidance, albeit lower than Germany's.

Individualism versus Collectivism

Germany is a highly individualistic society, scoring 67 on the individualism dimension. On the other hand, the Netherlands is even more individualistic, with a significantly higher score of 80, making it one of the most individualistic countries in Europe (Reisinger, 2009, p. 144).

Masculinity versus Femininity

The most significant distinction between the two cultures can be observed in the dimension of masculinity versus femininity. Germany is recognized as a highly masculine society, scoring 66 on this dimension, while the Netherlands demonstrates a significant deviation with a score of 14, making it a particularly feminine culture.

Long-Term versus Short-Term Orientation

Both countries share a long-term orientation. However, this dimension is more emphasized in German culture, scoring 83, compared to the Netherlands, which scores 67, indicating a slightly lesser focus on long-term planning and perspective.

Indulgence versus Restraint

The German culture demonstrates a restrained nature, as indicated by its low score of 40 on this dimension. The Netherlands, on the other hand, is clearly characterized by indulgence, as reflected by their high score of 68.

4.2 Implications for Dutch and German Travel Behavior

German tourists, unlike Dutch tourists, are more likely to seek information from reliable, fact-based sources such as tourist organization websites and tourist offices, as they actively seek to mitigate uncertainties in their travel decisions (Money & Crotts, 2003; Amaro & Duarte, 2017). The demand for a wide range of information leads to a more extensive search process and a higher investment of time in travel planning for German tourists (Money & Crotts, 2003; Cassidy & Pabel, 2019). Additionally, Germans are more likely to opt for package tours compared to their Dutch counterparts (Money & Crotts, 2003).

Conversely, Dutch tourists rely more on personal sources like family, friends, acquaintances, and recommendations on travel review websites (Money & Crotts, 2003; Amaro & Duarte, 2017). Their individualistic nature and lower tendency to avoid uncertainty result in longer travel durations and visits to a greater number of destinations (Pizam & Sussmann, 1995). They also display a preference for adventurous and action-oriented activities and are more open to interacting with fellow tourists (Rinuastuti, 2015).

When it comes to accommodation preferences, Dutch tourists lean towards camping vacations, due to their feminine tendencies, and are more likely to choose Airbnb accommodations, indicating a lower level of aversion to uncertainty compared to German tourists. Germans, on the other hand, tend to prefer to stay in hotels during their travels (Basci & Szanati, 2021; Lee, Erdogan, & Hong, 2021).

German tourists, influenced by their masculine characteristics, tend to evaluate tourism services rather negatively, express dissatisfaction, and show less loyalty, leading to a decreased likelihood of revisiting (Crotts & Erdmann, 2000). This behavior is further shaped by their high uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. Conversely, Dutch tourists, who score high on individualism and exhibit greater indulgence, tend to be more satisfied with

their vacation experience (Huang & Crotts, 2019). However, due to their individualistic nature and lower uncertainty avoidance, they are less inclined to revisit the same destinations, preferring to explore new ones due to their adventurous spirit (Risitano, Tutore, Sorrentino, & Quintano, 2017).

While further validation through quantitative research is necessary, these findings already provide valuable insights and can suggest courses of action for companies in the tourism industry.

4.3 Recommendations for Action

Having an understanding of customers' cultural backgrounds enables marketers and product developers to identify their expectations and needs, which makes it easier to put effective measures in place. In the following chapter, suggestions for marketing strategies and product development are made to cater the preferences and needs of German and Dutch tourists.

4.3.1 Recommendations to Meet the Needs of German Tourists

Provide Reliable Information

To fulfill German information seeking behavior, marketers should focus on providing accurate and trustworthy information through official tourism websites, brochures, and tourist offices. They have to make sure that the information is detailed, up-to-date, and easily accessible.

Offer Prepacked Tours

The preference of German tourists for package tours should be taken into account. To ensure convenience and a hassle-free experience, a variety of well-structured prepackaged tours could be developed by tour operators. Itineraries should include well-known places and a variety of activities.

Emphasize Quality and High Standards

As German tourists usually have high expectations and appreciate high quality services, high standards should be set for accommodations and customer service. Referring to certifications, displaying quality labels, and high ratings can increase the tourists trust in the service.

4.3.2 Recommendations to Meet the Needs of Dutch Tourists

Promote Adventurous Activities

Dutch travelers are known for having an adventurous spirit and looking for action-packed experiences. Thus, destinations and tour operators should offer and promote a variety of thrilling activities such as outdoor adventures, surfing, and mountain biking to meet the preferences of the Dutch and attract them as customers.

Encourage Tourists to Share Travel Experiences

Dutch people rely not only on recommendations from family and friends, but also on customer reviews and experiences posted online, when looking for information. Accordingly, hotels, travel guides and other tourism companies should encourage tourists to share their travel experiences on social media and travel review websites. To increase the reach and visibility of these experiences, marketers can request the use of location-specific hashtags or tagging the official account on social media platforms.

5 Conclusion

The primary objective of this bachelor's thesis was to explore the influence of culture, as measured by Hofstede's cultural dimensions, on the travel behavior and tourism experience. While previous studies typically focused on specific dimensions of travel behavior in relation to culture, this research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding across different travel behavior domains.

Within the theoretical framework, a flowchart was developed, illustrating that travel behavior can be divided into pre-travel, during-travel, and post-travel behaviors. This aforementioned model offered a structured approach to comprehend the various facets of travel behavior.

The literature review revealed, that all domains of travel behavior were influenced by at least one of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Accordingly, the research question can be answered as follows: From the very first recognition of needs to the evaluation of the travel experience and tourism products, culture significantly influences travel behavior. Particularly influential were the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and individualism.

Additionally, the analysis indicated a growing interest in exploring the dimension of indulgence versus restraint and its impact on travel behavior, though there is still a limited number of studies in this field. This suggests a possible direction for future research to look into this dimension further.

To gain further insights, a case study was conducted focusing on the travel behavior of German and Dutch tourists. This examination allowed the identification of specific travel behavior characteristics within each country, considering the connections between travel behavior and culture established in the literature review. The findings from this case study provided valuable information for deriving practical recommendations tailored to the respective countries.

It is important to note that while this thesis has provided significant insights into the travel behavior of German and Dutch tourists, the results should be validated through quantitative research. This confirmation would further strengthen the understanding of the relationship between culture and travel behavior of German and Dutch tourists enabling tourism businesses and organizations, such as destination management organizations, hotels, and service providers, to implement effective strategies for marketing and developing tourism products and services.

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Appendix A: Examined Research Paper

No.	Research Paper	Research Objective	Travel Behavior Domain	Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions					
				PDI	UAI	IDV	MAS	LOT	IND
1	Amaro & Duarte (2017)	Use of Social Media for travel	PrT1		X	X			
2	Backhaus et al. (2022)	Understanding of when travel decisions are made	PrT2		X			X	
3	Bacsi & Szanati (2021)	Influence of national culture and environmental awareness on the demand for domestic camping tourism	PrT5	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	Cassidy & Pabel (2019)	Tourists' propensity to use travel review websites	PrT1					X	
			PrT2		X				
			PoT2			X			
5	Cho (2001)	Importance placed on attributes of hotel selection	PrT5	X	X	X			
6	Crotts & Erdmann (2000)	Satisfaction of international travelers with airline ticket prices and airline services	PoT1				X		
7	Ergün & Kitaci (2018)	Relationships between the cultural dimensions of Hofstede and customer complaint behaviours	PoT2	X	X				

8	Huang & Crotts (2019)	Relationships between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and tourist satisfaction	PoT1		X	X	X	X	X	X
9	Jackson (2001)	Cultural factors influence on the choice of travel destination	PrT4			X				
10	Jung et al. (2020)	Relationship between Long- and Short-term orientation and experience provided by AR applications and users' perceived value	DT1						X	
11	Lee et al. (2021)	Influence of cultural and social factors on a consumer's participation in a sharing economy	PrT5		X	X	X	X	X	X
12	Liu & McClure (2001)	Cross-cultural differences in consumer complaint intentions and behavior	PoT2			X				
13	Matilla (2019)	The role of culture and purchase motivation in service encounter evaluations	PoT1	X						
14	Money & Crotts (2003)	The effect of uncertainty avoidance on information search, planning, and purchases of	PrT1		X					
			PrT2		X					

		international travel vacations	PrT3		X				
15	Pizam & Sussmann (1995)	Are all tourists perceived to be alike regardless of nationality, or does nationality make a difference?	PrT3		X	X			
			DT1		X	X			
16	Rinuastuti (2015)	Identifying behavior differences of Australian tourists and domestic tourists who visit Lombok island	DT1	X	X	X		X	
17	Risitano et al. (2017)	The influence of national cultural values on tourist behaviors (experience, satisfaction and behavioral intentions) during the America's Cup World Series in Naples	PoT3		X	X			
18	Zhang et al. (2020)	Hofstede's national cultural dimensions as the theoretical framework to examine the impact of national culture on guests' evaluation of hotel experience	PoT1		X	X	X	X	X

Eidesstattliche Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit bisher bei keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde eingereicht, sie selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt sowie Zitate kenntlich gemacht habe.

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Rostock, 12. Juli 2023

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